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Proposal submitted by Japan on the political declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations, and has the honour to request that the attached proposal of Japan on the political declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects be circulated as an official United Nations document of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference at its second session (see annex).

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Annex

Proposal of Japan on the political declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Japan wishes to propose the following to be considered in the context of the possible structure and elements/contents of the political declaration, either as an independent document or as part of the preamble to the programme of action.

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The States participating in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,

Determined to alleviate the plight of populations in the regions of the world besieged by armed conflicts and criminality, which are fuelled by illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in a manner that would bring the benefits of social and economic development and national, regional and international stability,

Acknowledging that the problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is closely linked with the problem of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and availability of such weapons, as reported in the Secretary-General's reports on small arms of 1997 and 1999,[1]

Noting that illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and availability of such weapons by themselves do not cause the conflicts in which they are used but can exacerbate and prolong such conflicts, that these conflicts have underlying causes which arise from a number of political, socio-economic, ethnic and cultural factors, and that these conflicts will not be finally resolved without addressing their root causes,

Convinced of the need for a comprehensive approach to promote, at the global and regional levels, the control and reduction of small arms and light weapons in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner as a contribution to international peace and security,

Gravely concerned at the devastating consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and availability of such weapons in the regions of the world besieged by armed conflicts and criminality as are manifested in (i) Sustained conflicts and exacerbated violence, contributing to the displacement of innocent populations, threatening international humanitarian law, as well as fuelling crime and encouraging terrorism, (ii) Promotion of a culture of violence and destabilization of societies by creating a propitious environment for criminal and contraband activities, (iii) Adverse effects on security and development, especially on women, refugees and other vulnerable groups, as well as on infrastructure and property, (iv) Adverse effects on children, a number of whom become victims of armed conflict, while others are exploited as participants in armed conflicts, and (v) Undermining of good governance, peace efforts and negotiations, jeopardizing the respect for fundamental human rights, and hindering economic development,

[1] A/52/298 and A/54/258

Reaffirming the participating States' respect for the principles as contained in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular of the inherent right to individual or collective self-defence recognized in Article 51, which implies that States also have the right to acquire arms with which to defend themselves,

Welcoming the increasing number of important regional initiatives undertaken in the last few years in dealing with the problem of small arms and light weapons, since the problem has characteristics specific to each region or subregion and a regional approach is the key in addressing it,

Recognizing the important role of and the need to cooperate with civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in raising awareness of the international community and in assisting its efforts to reduce, prevent and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and availability of such weapons,

Further reaffirming, in this respect, the urgent need for coordinated and sustained efforts, (i) by all States at the national level to enhance the capacity of national law enforcement and security agencies and officials to deal with all aspects of the problem of small arms and light weapons, (ii) by all States at the regional and international levels to develop and/or strengthen networks for information sharing and cooperation, and (iii) By the United Nations, other relevant international and regional organizations and States and groups of States in a position to do so to assist the regions, subregions and States affected by the problem of small arms and light weapons, at their request,

Decide to adopt and implement the following (or attached) programme of action, which is politically binding to all participating States at this Conference.